In the Claims:

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A paper transport apparatus comprising:

one or more image carriers carrying toner;

one or more transfer means, each transfer means having a surface that rotates and comes in contact with one of the image carrier or carriers at an upstream end of a first nip or nips, for causing one or more toner images formed on at least one of the image carrier or carriers to be electrostatically relocated onto one or more sheets of paper passing though said first nip or nips; and

one or more paper transport means disposed upstream in one or more transport directions ~~from~~ relative to at least one of the first nip or nips and comprising one or more pairs of pressure rollers holding one or more lead edge portion or portions of at least one of the sheet or sheets of paper in one or more second nips formed therebetween and rotating so as to cause transport of same;

at least one of the paper transport means being disposed to the side, on which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is present, of a plane more or less tangent to at least one of the first nip or nips formed between at least one of the image carrier or carriers and at least one of the transfer means; and

the one or more lead edge portions of the at least one of the sheet or sheets of paper being transported from at least one of the paper transport means along a trajectory toward ~~a location relative to the rotating surface of~~ at least one of the transfer means on the opposite side of said plane therefrom ~~positioned substantially adjacent to the upstream end of the first nip or nips associated with the at least one of the transfer means~~.

2. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 1 wherein:

at least one of the pressure roller pair or pairs comprises one or more drive rollers and one or more idler rollers;

at least one of the drive roller or rollers comprises at least one metal roller; and

at least one of the idler roller or rollers comprises at least one electrically conductive elastic roller.

3. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 2 wherein:

at least one of the idler roller or rollers of at least one of the pressure roller pair or pairs is driven by at least one of the drive roller or rollers.

4. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 2 wherein:

one or more voltages opposite in polarity to at least one electrostatic potential of at least one of the image carrier or carriers is or are applied to at least one of the idler roller or rollers of at least one of the pressure roller pair or pairs.

5. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to any of claims 2 through 4 wherein:

application of voltage to at least one of the idler roller or rollers is timed relative to holding of at least one of the lead edge portion or portions of at least one of the transported sheet or sheets of paper by at least one nip formed by at least one of the pressure roller pair or pairs.

6. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 5 wherein:

at least one length of at least one of the paper lead edge portion or portions at which voltage is applied is not so long as to substantially affect information contained in at least one image formed on at least one of the image carrier or carriers.

7. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 4 wherein:
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages is varied in accordance with difference in thickness attributable to type of transported paper.

8. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 5 wherein:
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages is varied in accordance with difference in thickness attributable to type of transported paper.

9. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 6 wherein:
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages is varied in accordance with difference in thickness attributable to type of transported paper.

10. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 7 wherein:
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages increases with increasing paper thickness.

11. (Previously Presented) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 8 wherein:
at least one of the applied voltage or voltages increases with increasing paper thickness.

12. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 2 wherein:
at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.

13. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 7 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.

14. (Previously Presented) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 8 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.

15. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 10 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.

16. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 11 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.

17. (Original) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 16 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is approximately equal to at least one absolute value of at least one development bias voltage which when applied to at least one of the transfer means would cause at least one latent electrostatic image on at least one of the image carrier or carriers to become manifest.

18. (Currently Amended) A paper transport method for transporting one or more sheets of paper relative to one or more image forming means comprising one or more image carriers carrying toner and one or more transfer rollers, each including a surface rotating and coming in contact with at least one of the image carrier or carriers at a first nip or nips for causing one or more toner images formed on at least one of the image carrier or carriers to be electrostatically relocated onto one or more sheets of paper; said paper transport method including the steps of:

(i) providing one or more paper transport means disposed

(a) upstream from an upstream end of said first nip or nips in one or more transport directions relative to at least one of the transfer means and (b) to the side, on which at least one of the image carriers is present, of a plane more or less tangent to the at least one first nip or nips formed between at least one of said image carrier or carriers and the surface of at least one of said transfer roller or rollers, said one or more paper transport means comprising one or more pairs of oppositely rotating pressure rollers holding one or more leading edge portion or portions of at least one of said sheet or sheets of paper in one or more second nips formed therebetween; and

(ii) transporting said leading edge portion or portions of said at least one sheet or sheets of paper from said at least one second nip of the paper transport means along a trajectory toward ~~a location relative to the rotating surface of at least one of the transfer means positioned substantially adjacent to the upstream end of the first nip or nips associated with the at least one of the transfer means.~~at least one of said transfer roll or rollers on the opposite saide of said plane therefrom.

19. (Previously Presented) A paper transport method according to claim 18, wherein:

one or more voltages, that is or are timed in prescribed fashion and opposite in polarity to at least one electrostatic potential applied to at least one of the image carrier or carriers, is or are applied to one or more of said pressure rollers of said one or more paper transport means such that said one or more voltages is or are applied to only lead edge portion or portions of at least one of said sheet or sheets of paper transported to at least one of said image forming means.

20. (Original) A paper transport method according to claim 19 wherein:

at least one length of at least one of the paper lead edge portion or portions at which voltage is applied is not so long as to substantially affect information contained in at least one image formed on at least one of the image carrier or carriers.

21. (Original) A paper transport method according to claim 20 wherein:

at least one of the applied voltage or voltages is varied in accordance with difference in thickness attributable to type of transported paper, being increased with increasing thickness of the paper.

22. (Original) A paper transport method according to any of claims 19 through 21 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.

23. (Original) A paper transport method according to claim 22 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is approximately equal to at least one absolute value of at least one development bias voltage which when applied to at least one of the transfer means would cause at least one latent electrostatic image on at least one of the image carrier or carriers to become manifest.

24. (Previously Presented) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 9 wherein:

at least one of the applied voltage or voltages increases with increasing paper thickness.

25. (Previously Presented) A paper transport apparatus according to claim 9 wherein:

at least one absolute value of at least one maximum applied voltage is less than at least one absolute value of at least one surface potential to which at least one of the image carrier or carriers is charged.